SOLO EXHIBITION

RUBANAH
underground hub

Amongst reeds, evanesces, shines…

Evelyn Pritt

Curated by
Grace Samboh

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Fenestra Imaging

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The invitation to "look at a view" is thus a suggestion to look at nothing*[1]

We live in an era where forgetting one's wallet is no longer a disaster. Yet, many of us would hastily return, even if it takes thirty minutes, just to retrieve that small device that glows in our hands. The phone, and social media, have transformed the act of taking photographs of oneself into genuine professions (e.g., influencers, KOLs). It's rather amusing to reflect on how I oscillated between love and hatred for the so-called 'Sontag's tourists'[2]—those who incessantly photograph their vacations or anything, rather than fully experiencing the moment. How do people relate to one another today? Is it through mediated images, photographs, or perhaps something else entirely? Are genuine encounters still possible, or have algorithms come to regulate everything?

Amidst the stream of never-ending images and visualities, can one still acknowledge beauty? It is difficult to write about beauty nowadays—many people think it's obsolete. Consequently, writing about landscapes, which naturally involves discussing their beauty, is no easy task. Evelyn's photographs, that you will be experiencing here, are—simply put—landscapes. Therefore, they are—again, simply put—beautiful. My repetition of the hyphenated "simply put" is not an attempt to dumb things down. Rather, it is an invitation for a mindful exploration of what might be easily simplified as "landscapes" and/or "beauty"—despite the complexity and challenge inherent in achieving these two things. If it seems far-fetched, allow me to explore the notion of encounters that happened *in situ*, where these landscapes and Evelyn were present; *ex situ*, in this space, where we are now present; and amidst both, where our own encounters is possibility, is a potential.

Evelyn's photographs carry a form of intimacy, especially towards the transient beauty that is often overlooked in the mundane. Despite their familiarity, they appear foreign or even new due to their ever-changing nature. Clouds remain clouds, and the ocean remains the ocean, but there is never a second chance to see them in the exact same form. Mind you, her landscapes are not mere depictions of places; they are portraits of the environment. Evelyn's delicate interplay of light and texture, even in natural settings, imbues them with a profound sense of character. Indeed, she treats these landscapes like portraits, documenting her repeated encounters with water, moss, clouds, and other elements of nature. It is impossible to encounter the array of clouds that Evelyn has photographed. Since nature does not conserve itself in particular forms, the unique character of each cloud, ocean wave, or mountain she encounters only exists in her photographs.

Even if one's body is the navel of one's world, Evelyn, the photographer, the artist, doesn't operate like a watchtower or some central point. Instead, she serves as a locus for reference, memory,

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[1] Mitchell continues, "[...]—or more precisely to look at looking itself—to engage in a kind of conscious apperception of space as it unfolds itself in a particular place." He laboured more into this, "'Look at the view!' Not 'look at the mountain' (or the ocean, the sky, the plains, the forest, the city, the river), but 'look at the view.' The vernacular expression suggests that the invitation to look at landscape is an invitation not to look at any specific thing, but to ignore all particulars in favour of an appreciation of a total gestalt, a vista or scene that may be dominated by some specific features, but is not simply reducible to that feature." See: Mitchell, W. J. T. (2002). *Landscape and Power* (pp. v-vii). Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.

[2] "Most tourists feel compelled to put the camera between themselves and whatever is remarkable that they encounter. Unsure of other responses, they take a picture. This gives shape to experience: stop, take a photograph, and move on. The method especially appeals to people handicapped by a ruthless work ethic—Germans, Japanese, and Americans. Using a camera appeases the anxiety which the work-driven feel about not working when they are on vacation and supposed to be having fun. They have something to do that is like a friendly imitation of work: They can take pictures." See: Sontag, Susan (1999). "On photography". In D. Crowley & P. Hayer's (Eds.), *Communication in history: Technology, culture, society* (pp. 174-178). New York: Longman.

imagination, and integration.[3] Echoing Liz Wells, the act of naming is an act of taming. Wells pushed, "Geography, through naming and investigation, crucially contributes to defining place. Geo means earth, so geo-graphy literally means earth 'drawing', encompassing diagrams, maps, graphs, writings and photographs."[4] Evelyn's landscapes are non-geographical; they do not—obviously—hint at their locations. They could be anywhere on earth. This does not mean that the specific locations don't matter, but rather that their names are not the reason she took these photographs. These places are not nameless; she simply chooses not to echo these names. This gesture creates a loop of potentiality, allowing these places to exist in several, if not many, parts of the world. Considering that two-thirds of the earth is ocean, this is a liberating approach. Even though we are talking about photographs, the non-geographical aspect doesn't "capture." Instead, it encounters.

It is no secret that titles often serve as entry points to artworks. Evelyn's titles might also be considered another form of photographs. They set the record, witness, focus, confirm, and guarantee what we will encounter in her work. Some titles introduce her subject matter straightforwardly, such as Clouds, Terra, or Ocean Waves. However, they do more than describe; they focus the viewer's attention on the subject's inherent qualities, much like the name of a person might highlight their specific traits. Others emphasise her location, indicating from where she, the photographer, viewed, such as *Aerial - Mountain or Upper Plane*. Offering a sense of scale and depth, at the same time she invites us to engage with these landscapes on a personal level. A few have a particular tone, hinting at the subject matter she presents, sometimes with a playful twist, like *Droplets* instead of *Ocean Waves* or *Water*, and *Stars Below* instead of *Sands* or *Beach*.

> All senses, including vision, are extensions of the tactile sense; the senses are specialisations of skin tissue, and all sensory experiences are modes of touching and thus related to tactility. [..] Touch is the sensory mode that integrates our experience of the world with that of ourselves.[5]

As the concepts of *touch* and *sight* are primarily symbolic, some things don't have to be three-dimensional to evoke a sense of touch. Some works are framed, some encapsulated in glass, and some are bare. The variety in how these photographs are held, hung, suspended, or simply leaned onto something, comes from a rigorous effort to appeal to our sense of touch and solidify the photographs. Sometimes, touch signifies three-dimensional space, contrasting with optical "flatness."[6] This *touch*, this inclination not just to represent but to become, stems from a place of eagerness, curiosity, and a desire for continuity and relationship.

There is something less complicated and somewhat democratising about these encounters—a meeting by chance, stumbling upon, running into, coming across. Democratising in the sense that if all parties feel 'touched,' some sort of next move is bound to happen—the photograph, and its exhibition, being one example. If not, each party carries on, whether in search of something or simply being. *ex situ*, away from the site where Evelyn photographed these landscapes—here, in RUBANAH—we attempt to evoke various encounters with Evelyn's landscapes. What kinds of encounters? Some works are installed in particular ways, not to hide their two-dimensionality, but to allow us to engage with

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3 Pallasma (2008). Ibid (pp. 11).

4 Wells, Liz (2022). *Land matters: Landscape photography, culture and identity* (pp. 2-4). London & New York: I. B. Tauris,.

5 Pallasma, Juhani (2008). *The eyes of the skin: Architecture and the senses* (pp. 9-13). West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.

6 Margaret Olin (1989). "Validation by Touch in Kandinsky's Early Abstract Art," in *Critical Inquiry 16* (pp. 144–172). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

them differently—through scale, gaze, textures, and touches.

One work is installed on the floor so that we can surround it, circle it, and view it from different perspectives, offering a glimpse of the photographer's position just moments before these photographs came into being. Two others block the space, ensuring that we all divide the space. Two others float in conjunction. A large work strikes us as we enter this space—as if teasing our whereabouts, a couple of seconds after walking down a few stairs. The exhibition aims to be as tactile as possible. The installation, the array of works, is an endeavour towards (re)situating us, prompting questions about our relationship with our surroundings—yes, the landscapes, but also the societies in which such landscapes are understood.

Enjoy the show! See you amidst the reeds, evanesce, shines…

Upper Plane #7
2014
Giclee photo print on 'Illford Gallerie' textured cotton paper
80 x 40 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Upper Plane #5
2016
Giclée photo print on ‘Ilford Galerie’ Textured Cotton Rag paper
188 x 94 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Ocean Waves II #8
2015
Giclée photo print on 'Ilford Galerie' Tesuki
Washi Echizen Deckled Edge 110gsm paper
96 x 69 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Droplets #1
2015
Giclée photo print on 'Ilford Galerie' Gold Fibre Gloss paper
135 x 90 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Ocean Waves II #7
2015
Giclée photo print on 'Ilford Galerie' Textured Cotton Rag paper
80 x 120 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Clouds #1
2014
Giclée photo print on 'Ilford Galerie' Smooth Cotton Rag paper
188 x 125 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Stars Below - Burst
2014
Chromogenic print on Fujicolor Crystal Archive glossy paper
80 x 120 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Ocean - Bird #2
2015
Giclée photo print on 'Ilford Galerie' Gold Fibre Gloss paper
150 x 100 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Ocean Waves II #9A
2015
Giclée photo print on 'Ilford Galerie' Textured Cotton Rag paper
80 x 120 cm

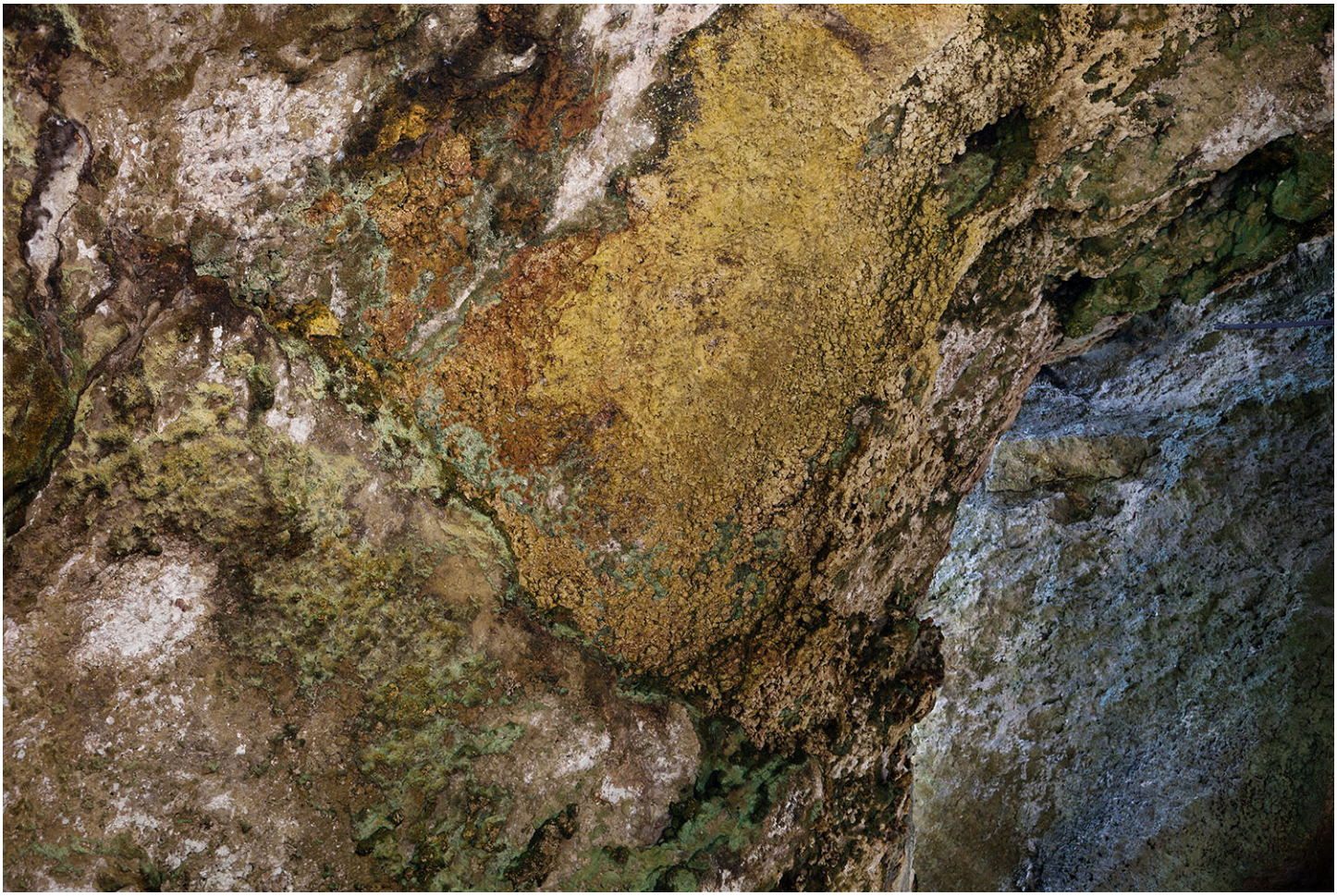
VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Ocean Waves II #9B
2015
Giclée photo print on 'Ilford Galerie' Textured Cotton Rag paper
80 x 120 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

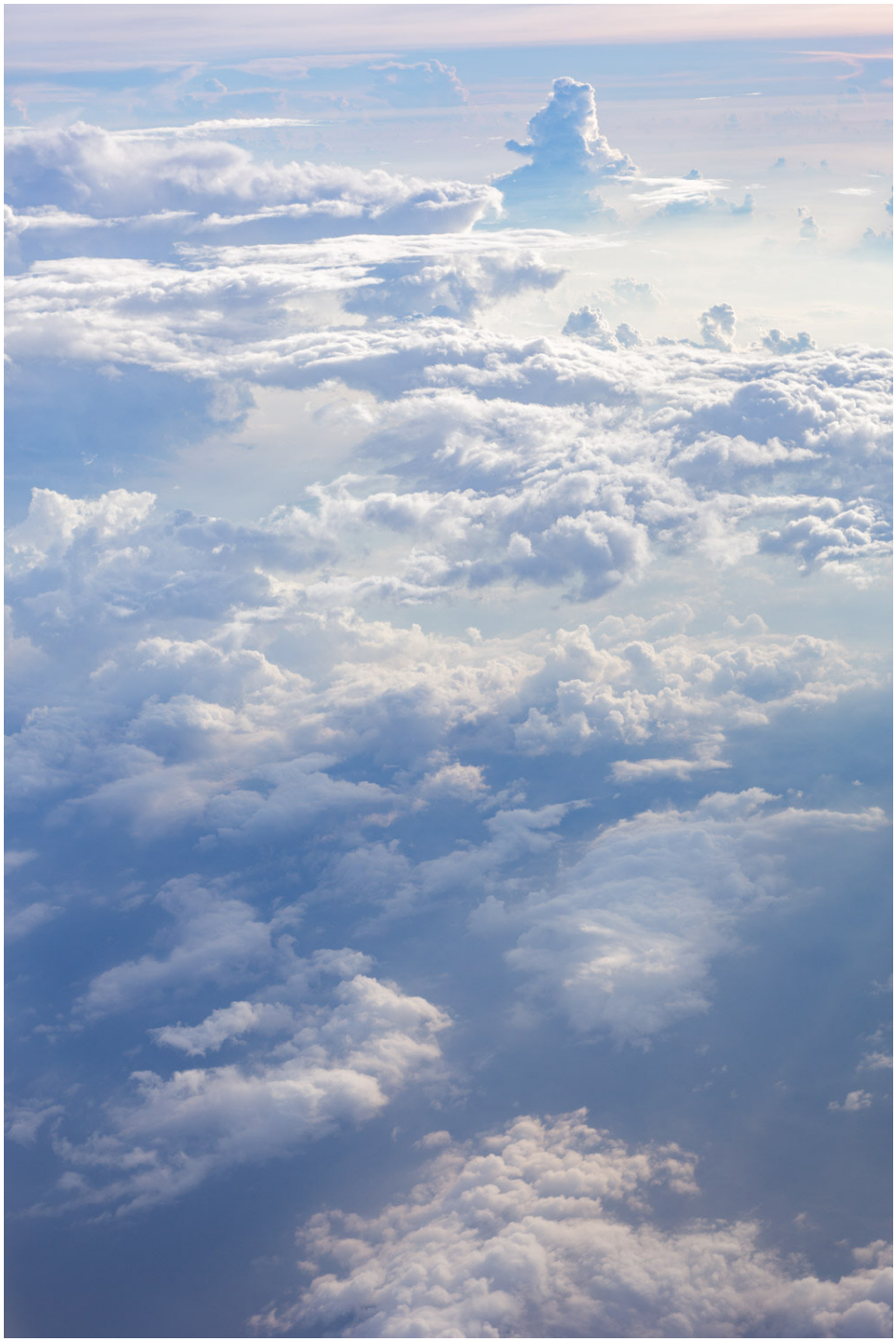
Ocean Waves II #6
2014
Giclée photo print on ‘Ilford Galerie’ Textured Cotton Rag paper
240 x 120 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP



Terra #1
2012
Giclée photo print on 'Ilford Galerie' Gold Fibre Gloss paper
120 x 80 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP



Clouds #2
2018
Giclée photo print on 'Ilford Galerie' Textured Cotton Rag paper
120 x 180 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Terra #5
2019
Giclée photo print on 'Ilford Galerie' Textured Cotton Rag paper
120 x 180 cm

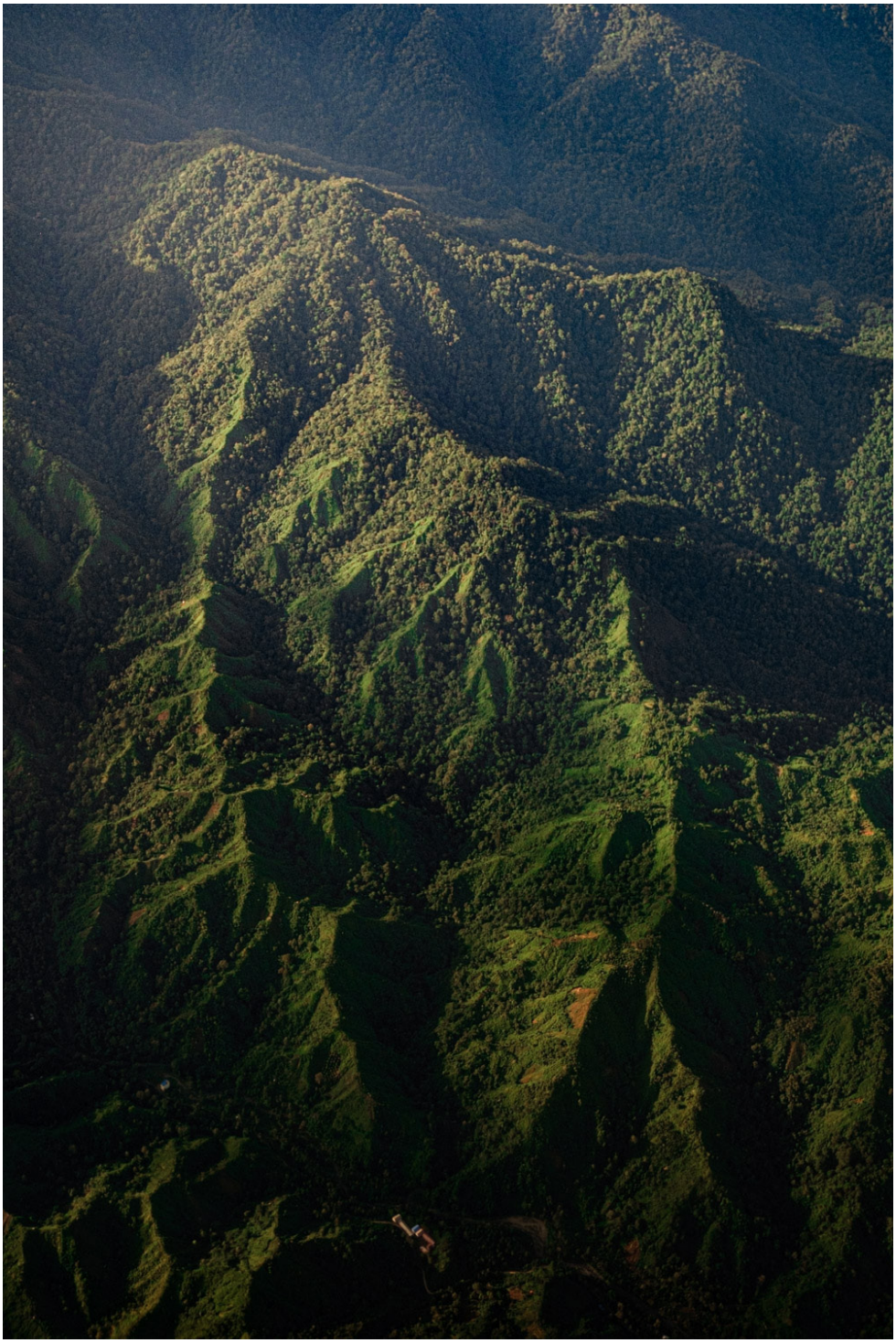
VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Stars Below - Moss
2015
Giclée photo print on 'Ilford Galerie' Gold Fibre Gloss paper
120 x 80 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Aerial - mountain #1
2023
Giclée photo print on ‘Ilford Galerie’ Gold Fibre Gloss paper
40 x 60 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP



Aerial - mountain #2
2022
Giclée photo print on ‘Ilford Galerie’ Gold Fibre Gloss paper
60 x 40 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Clouds #3
2023
Giclée photo print on 'Ilford Galerie' Textured Cotton Rag paper
150 x 225 cm

VE 1/2 + 2 AP

Evelyn Pritt (b. 1978, Jakarta) is a photographer who actively pursues personal photography projects on nature. Among her previous series are investigations about natural and urban landscapes, particularly focussing on water bodies and contamination, as well as abandoned residential areas. As an artist, her work has been exhibited widely locally and abroad, including at Objectifs Centre for Photography and Film (Singapore), the 2015 Jakarta Biennale' (Gudang Sarinah, Jakarta), Jakarta International Photo Summit' (2014) at the Galeri Nasional Indonesia. Pritt graduated from the Visual Communication Design undergraduate programme at Universitas Pelita Harapan.

Colophon

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